

VZCZCXRO4267
RR RUEHAG RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHUP #0309/01 1101605
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
R 201605Z APR 09
FM AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4102
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BUDAPEST 000309

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/CE JAMIE LAMORE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/19/2014
TAGS: PGOV PINR PHUM PREL SOCI HU
SUBJECT: HOLOCAUST DENIAL - HOLOCAUST COMMEMORATION

Classified By: Acting P/E Counselor Jon Martinson, reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (U) Summary. As the far-right Magyar Garda crossed the line into holocaust denial, Budapest observed the 60th anniversary of the holocaust. The "March of the Living" event the evening of April 19, attended by new Prime Minister Gordon Bajnai, as well as the Charge and Parliamentarians across the political spectrum, provided a strong counter-message that the holocaust must never be forgotten. Parliamentarians responded with strong words of condemnation for the Magyar Garda (MG) and far-right Jobbik party during the April 20 plenary session. With European Parliamentary elections on the horizon in June, expect increased Socialist (MSzP) and Free Democrat (SzDSz) criticism of opposition political parties for courting the far-right. End summary.

¶2. (U) As a lead-in to Budapest events for Holocaust Remembrance Day, 200 members of the extreme-right Magyar Garda movement assembled in Budapest on April 18. Speaking to the group, Magyar Garda leader Istvan Dosa said "nothing about the holocaust is true," and then, in protest against "Zionist world power," led the participants in a march to the German Embassy. Carrying placards in Hungarian and German - some reading "the truth will make you free, strike back with the Third Reich, enough of the holocaust dogma" - while singing Nazi Germany's anthem, the "Horst Wessel," the group unsuccessfully attempted to present a petition to a German Embassy representative.

¶3. (U) In stark contrast, on Sunday, April 19, about 10,000 participants, including newly elected Prime Minister Gordon Bajnai, Head of Parliament's Human Rights Committee and Fidesz member, Zoltan Balogh, former Prime Minister Peter Boross, and Charge Levine, joined in the torchlight "March of the Living" to remember the 600,000 Hungarian victims of the holocaust. In a separate program earlier in the day, several thousand attended a program in front of the "Terror Haz" (Terror House) museum in Budapest, to commemorate Nazi victims.

¶4. (U) In response to the Magyar Garda demonstration, MSzP faction leader Ildiko Lendvai, SzDSz caucus leader Peter Gusztos and Education Minister Istvan Hiller made reference to the Magyar Garda event during speeches in Parliament on April 20. Lendvai, calling the MG demonstration "shameful," said the MG are neither radicals nor right-wing politicians, "they are simply Nazis," noting that such an event could not happen in any other European country without sanctions. In his speech, Gusztos said "political terrorism exists in Hungary - and it is Jobbik." He said the statements of Dosa and the words on the placards went beyond the acceptable boundary of free speech, using "the distorted version of the Auschwitz slogan 'die arbeit macht frei'." Gusztos added that it is now clear that Jobbik is a neo-Nazi party, and "it is a shame to see this 60 years after the holocaust," He called on all political forces to isolate Jobbik. Minister Hiller took the floor on behalf of the Government, and condemning the Nazi demonstration, said he proposes that the

Parliamentary parties pass a law as soon as possible to punish those who deny the holocaust, just as such laws exist in Austria and Germany.

¶5. (C) Comment. Unlike Germany and Austria, Hungary has no law that would punish those who deny the holocaust. Although the Government made several attempts in the past to modify the legal code or change the constitution to restrict such activities, the opposition Fidesz party, President Solyom, and the Constitutional Court have opposed such measures as a restriction on the right of free speech and the right of assembly. While the Magyar Garda has played the anti-Semitic card in the past, for much of its two year existence its focus has been on "gypsy crime." However, the far-right Jobbik party, which established Magyar Garda, has recently raised the level of its anti-Semitic rhetoric. In particular, Krisztina Morvai, the party's leading candidate for the June European Parliamentary elections accused the Israeli government of genocide in the Gaza strip. Also three weeks ago, she began a public speech by raising a sling-shot she had received from the "Palestinian freedom fighters," vowing to continue the fight in Hungary against those who attempt to steal the country," a veiled reference to Jewish investors.

¶6. (C) Comment continued. Fidesz continues to walk a fine line between reaching out to right-wing voters while not supporting the radical rhetoric. As Political Capital analyst Christian Szabados recently told PolOff, Fidesz's greatest fear is Jobbik garnering 4.9 percent in the upcoming elections, not enough to pass the five percent threshold for representation in parliament, but enough to seriously hurt

BUDAPEST 00000309 002 OF 002

Fidesz candidates. End comment.
Levine